



Nevada Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum

Hosted by:

Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the Newly Combined Forum

Wednesday, March 21, 2012 – 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Location: Grand Sierra Resort
NV Conference and Exhibition Center, Room NV 11
2500 East 2nd Street, Reno, NV 89595

Minutes

1. Call To Order and Introductions (Bob Foerster)- The meeting was called to order at 2:21 p.m.

Forum Members Present: Bob Foerster (NVRWA), Harvey Johnson (IVGID), Mike Ariztia (SVGID), Lynn Forsberg (Elko County), Cam McKay (KGID)

Representing the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP): Jennifer Carr, Chief, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW); Kelly McGowan, Environmental Scientist, Operator Certification (Op Cert) Program; Nan Paulson (Op Cert Administrative Assistant)

Test Administrator: Ron Penrose (TMWA)

2. Approval of Forum Minutes from March 21, 2012– *Action Item*

All were in favor of approving the minutes.

3. Drinking Water Exam Results Review from September 2011 Tests (Kelly McGowan)

Kelly discussed the September Exam Results. He encouraged managers and supervisors to look at statistics, see where deficiencies are, and make resources available. The statistics may help when bringing in operators, if they are motivated to learn. Kelly showed the test result statistics on an overhead screen for viewing by the audience.

Statistics for Distribution: 58% of the testers in the North passed, while 56% passed in the South. For Treatment, of 37 exams, 51% passed. In the North, 9 passed and 12 failed. In the South, 10 passed and 6 failed.

An operator in the audience asked Kelly if Stats for Waste Water were available. Kelly had Waste Water statistics from Jennifer McMartin. He presented them on the overhead screen and said they would be part of the minutes. These statistics will also be posted on the Forum Web page.

Another question was what the national pass/fail average was. Jennifer Carr said it is about 50/50 and that she wished testers would study more. Bob Foerster said he sees about the same percentage.

Kelly talked about the AWWA's Mastery Summary Report. There was discussion about how many had actually mastered the D-1. One example of this is: 52.85% tested had not mastered the test portion about Evaluating Operations of Equipment (pg. 1 of report). More training may be needed in areas where 50% of testers fail to at least partially master a topic. We will post the full reports on the website.

Kelly said that using 5 years of stats may not be good enough to use as a tool for training needs. SDW will post more on-line resources as they become available, and when the Forum comes up with more ideas to help the operators.

Kelly McGowan, Ron Penrose, Crystel Montecinos, Bob Foerster, and Lynn Forsberg discussed the testing that is available throughout the State. SDW sets up three testing cycles per year. The AWWA has Computer Based Testing (CBT) in Reno and Henderson. It is an ABC test that is proctored by H & R Block Tax offices. The benefits are that results are made available immediately. These tests are administered through the CA/NV Section of the AWWA. Because the results are immediate, operators can reapply right away if they do not pass, and can re-test within 60 days or apply to test for an upgrade.

Lynn asked how the AWWA would know if the applicants are qualified. Kelly replied that the AWWA would base the applicant's qualifications from the applications. Jennifer Carr said the AWWA has more strict requirements than NDEP, which is why we accept reciprocity from their certifications. She added that they require more experience and 36 hours of education.

4. Review of previous years' statistics for retesting in same grade level – *Action Item*

Kelly talked about a query that was done at SDW regarding applicants that apply repeatedly for the same test because they do not pass the test. A query was done for the Distribution tests, but not for the Treatment.

Mike Ariztia asked how the Pass/Fail rate might differentiate between ABC and the AWWA tests. Harvey Johnson said the WW CBT pass rate is higher than the regular tests. Mike Ariztia asked if there is a point when someone should ask if the person is cut out for the field. Guest #1 said a lot of people are not good test takers. He himself has taken tests a couple of times and he freezes up.

Lynn Forsberg commented that utilities need to enforce hiring requirements that mandate certification must be achieved within a specific time period. An example of this would be 6 months to a year. Mike Ariztia added that the company's internal policy must be upheld. It's a matter of public health and trust.

Kelly McGowan mentioned that the water "Professionals" want to be paid and viewed as professionals. It is in their best interest to get the highest level of certificate that they qualify to obtain. Kelly added that when he was certified in securities, he could test twice, and then there was cooling off period. It made him study to make sure he passed the tests. Another example would be that if an attorney tested 14 times before finally passing the bar exam, would that attorney be your best option to hire?

Mike Ariztia commented on the study time again stating that we need to get operators to not cram just a few days prior to the exam. Cam McKay mentioned that this should not be NDEP's responsibility. Jennifer Carr said she can put in for a regulation change to limit the number of times a person can test for the same grade within a specific time frame. Mike added that we would not be able to control the testing with the AWWA. Lynn Forsberg said some employers might balk at regulations like that.

Guest #2 talked about the test and said the three hours allowed for the grade 1 test might be fine with 20 questions, but for grades 3 or 4 might need more time. The tests are very comprehensive, especially for the grade 4. Lynn Forsberg said he would like to see it changed for Waste Water testing.

Cam McKay said some responsibility falls onto the employer. Employers should have employees show how they come up with a chlorine amount. Employers should actually have the employees show the steps used when figuring amounts.

5. Training Needs – *Open Discussion*

Bob Foerster asked if there was any particular training that anyone would like to see. Guest #2 said that working in rural Nevada might mean an operator won't see the same issues that may be seen in Southern Nevada. For example: A Rotating Bio Contractor is no longer being used but there is a question on the test about it.

Tim Benson talked about an AWWA challenge form, and wondered what should be done since the tests were created by ABC. Tim added that operators should write down questions they feel should be reviewed. Ron Penrose said he would bring up that question with the CA NV AWWA Certification Committee. The Committee meeting will be April 2nd. Proctors will receive exams and send them to the AWWA. Ron will ask what is being done with the test questions that operators have concerns about.

Ron said the ABC Exam reports tell testers the areas they are weak in. These reports also help with training. Ron added that even with TMWA employees, there are some that take the same test 4 or 5 times. Ron is not sure if they are studying for long periods of time or not.

6. NDEP Updates (Kelly McGowan)

None noted due to time restraints.

7. Waterlines Publication (All Attendees)

a. Article Assignments for Next Edition

-On Site chlorine generation

-Jennifer Carr will talk about an enforcement case regarding a system that was shut down due to an egregious violation.

-Crystal Montecinos mentioned a vendor, Rick Allen, who will write about Waste Water critical issues.

8. Member's Open Comments

Ron Penrose asked for emails relating to issues he can take with him and present to the CA/NV AWWA Certification Committee.

9. Public Comments- combined with #8 above.

10. Upcoming conferences/trainings – CA/NV AWWA Spring Conference – April 2-5, 2012 Santa Clara, CA; NWEA Annual Conference, John Ascuaga's Nugget, Sparks, NV April 23, 2012 – April 25, 2012

Crystal Montecinos is still contracted through June for video conference classes, and hopes to continue. Announcements will go out via emails.

11. Next Forum Meeting – Action Item

Rescheduled to Tuesday, June 19, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. 901 S. Stewart St., second floor conference room. Will video conference to Las Vegas and Elko.

12. Adjourn

Cam McKay asked for a motion to adjourn. Lynn Forsberg made the motion, Mike Ariztia seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Reminder to Certified Operators: You are eligible to receive renewal contact hours for attendance at Operator Forum Meetings!

September 21, 2011 Safe Drinking Water Exams

Comparative Analysis Pass/Failure Rates

Water Distribution - Entire State:

40 Passed the Exam
30 Failed the Exam

Passing Rate of 57%
Failure Rate of 43%

Water Distribution – Northern Region:

25 Passed the Exam
18 Failed the Exam

Northern Region:

Northern NV:
Passing Rate of 58%
Failure Rate of 42%

Water Distribution – Southern Region:

15 Passed the Exam
12 Failed the Exam

Southern Region:

Southern NV:
Passing Rate of 56%
Failure Rate of 44%

Water Treatment - Entire State:

19 Passed the Exam
18 Failed the Exam

Passing Rate of 51%
Failure Rate of 49%

Water Treatment – Northern Region:

9 Passed the Exam
12 Failed the Exam

Northern Region:

Northern NV:
Passing Rate of 43%
Failure Rate of 57%

Water Treatment – Southern Region:

10 Passed the Exam
6 Failed the Exam

Southern Region:

Southern NV:
Passing Rate of 63%
Failure Rate of 37%

NDEP's query of repeated Distribution testing by individual operators since 2008

Exam Type	# Not Passed	Dates of Not Passing
D1	6	March 2009, September 2009, March 2010, September 2010, March 2011, June 2011
D1	3	March 2009, September 2009, September 2010
D3	2	March 2009, March 2011
D3	2	March 2008; June 2008
D1	2	March 2011, June 2011
D3	5	March 2009, September 2009, March 2010, June 2010, March 2011
D4	2	September 2009, June 2010
D1	2	September 2008, March 2009
D2	2	March 2010, March 2011
D3	6	March 2010, June 2010, September 2010, March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D2	2	June 2008, March 2009
D4	2	March 2008; September 2008
D3	2	March 2009, March 2011
D1	7	March 2009, September 2009, March 2010, September 2010, March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D2	2	March 2009, September 2009
D1	7	March 2008; June 2008, September 2008, March 2009, September 2009, June 2010, September 2011
D1	3	September 2008, March 2011, June 2011
D2	3	June 2008, March 2009, March 2010
D1	4	March 2009, March 2010, June 2010, September 2010
D3	2	June 2008, September 2008
D3	3	June 2010, March 2011, June 2011
D3	2	September 2010, March 2011
D2	2	September 2008, September 2009
D2	2	June 2008, September 2008
D1	2	March 2008, June 2008
D4	2	September 2009, March 2010
D2	2	March 2008, September 2008
D3	6	March 2009, March 2010, September 2010, March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D1	3	March 2009, September 2009, June 2010
D2	2	March 2011, June 2011
D2	3	March 2008, September 2008, March 2009

D2	2	March 2010, June 2010, September 2010, March 2011
D1	2	March 2008, June 2008
D1	2	June 2008, September 2008
D3	2	March 2008, June 2008
D2	4	September 2010, March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D1	2	March 2009, September 2009
D1	3	March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D1	2	September 2008, March 2009
D1	2	March 2009, September 2009
D3	2	March 2008, June 2008
D1	3	June 2008, March 2009, March 2011
D4	3	June 2008, March 2010, September 2010
D2	2	September 2010, September 2011
D2	4	March 2008; June 2008, September 2008, March 2009
D4	3	March 2009, September 2009, March 2010
D4	2	September 2009, June 2010
D3	6	September 2009, March 2010, September 2010, March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D1	2	March 2008, June 2008
D3	4	September 2009, June 2010, March 2011, June 2011
D1	3	March 2008, June 2008, September 2008
D2	3	March 2011, June 2011, September 2011
D1	2	March 2009, September 2009
D1	2	March 2008, June 2008
D4	5	March 2009, September 2009, March 2010, June 2010, September 2010
D4	5	September 2009, March 2010, September 2010, March 2011, September 2011
D4	2	March 2008, September 2008
D1	2	June 2008, September 2008
D1	3	June 2008, September 2008, March 2009
D2	3	March 2010, June 2010, September 2010
D3	2	March 2009, March 2010
D2	2	June 2008, March 2009
D2	2	March 2011, September 2011
D3	2	March 2008, June 2008